

The Submittal Process

The submittal process is an integral part of the construction of a building, affecting everyone on the construction team. The process is initiated by the general contractor as a method of managing the selection of materials, shop drawings, catalog cuts, samples, material mock-ups, test reports, and certificates of compliance.

Following is a list of the important points regarding the submittal process.

- **Consensus** of expectations is a very important part of the submittal process. At the beginning of the project, the general contractor will outline and discuss with the team what is expected during the submittal process. The goal is to build consensus so that everyone agrees on what to expect, and what not to expect. This is important because different projects have different scopes of work, which translates into different submittal needs. An example might be to agree on the number of different samples of glazing that will be used to make the final selection, based upon the contractor's review of the specifications, availability from the supplier, and other conditions.
- The **submittal log** is how the general contractor manages the submittal process. It includes submission dates, required return dates, review by the architect, required delivery of material, and other items relative to the project schedule. Long lead time items receive special consideration as they can impact a project schedule and create tremendous problems in coordination. Shop drawings are also critical to include in the log, as they are used to manufacture or assemble many of the components of the project. A good example of this is steel framing, which must be coordinated down to the last bolt.
- **Response time** is equally important as the whole project depends upon what happens next. For example, you can't paint until the paint colors have been selected, or until the drywall has been installed and taped. The drywall can't go up until the partitions are in place and rough electrical has been installed, etc. Approval of response time, as developed and managed by the submittal process, become time-critical components to managing the construction schedule.

- The final destination of the approved shop drawings, catalog cuts, and approved samples is the **jobsite**. Here they are used to verify all material shipped to the site. Glazing once again offers a good example, in which the actual glazing material is compared at the jobsite to the approved glazing sample that was provided by the subcontractor/supplier, approved by the architect, and used as a basis for placing the order. If there is a discrepancy, the general contractor can easily refer to the submittal log to determine the dates of the various approvals, and what criteria were used to place the order. The submittal log in the end becomes a tool for verification.

Without question, the submittal process, controlled by the submittal log, is a valuable tool for everyone. It's a tool that keeps the project on track, and can help identify long lead issues so the team can respond in a timely manner.

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